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Working 16 Hours

'Scared' Pillion Is 'Running Hard'

This is one of a series of Courier-Express election profiles.

By LUCIAN C. WARREN

Rep. John R. Pillion, the Hamburg Republican seeking reelection in the 19th Congressional District, is running scared. The man who two years ago had 62 per cent of the vote, much better than either Gov. Rockefeller or Sen. Jacob Javits did in his district, is now, by his own estimate, stepping up his campaigning efforts by at least 50 per cent.

"This election," he explained, "is full of surprises. Either one or both branches of the state legislature could go Democratic. I don't want to be one of those that gets surprised."

To forestall an unpleasant election surprise, the suburban Buffalo conservative is putting in at least a 16-hour day campaigning. The other day it was a 20-hour day as his auto broke down on Buffalo's Skyway late in the evening. Never a man to waste a moment, Pillion returned to his campaign headquarters for another few hours while repairmen put his car in running condition. That night he got to bed at 2:30 a.m.

But on Monday, the Pillion day was more typical. He arose at 7:30. At midnight—some four packs of cigarettes, 15 cups of coffee, one Wales Center GOP rally and a dozen assorted other campaigning efforts later—he was able to call it a day.

In the morning it was a shuttle operation. While many persons were still having breakfast, he delivered his daughter, Mrs. Charlotte Gile, to his campaign headquarters in the Ellcott Square Bldg., from which by election time more than one million pieces of Pillion-for-Congress literature will have been dispatched.

His strategy is checking to see whether campaigning was running smoothly. He drove to Lackawanna, where he met with campaign aides in a small office next to city hall where he first began to practice law in 1929. This is where he does his best campaign thinking, and on Monday he perfected the scripts for some radio-TV Pillion-boosting spots.

After a lunch on the run, the conservative legislator arrived at

The scripts called for two one-minute scenes which will be shown frequently on three Buffalo television stations between now and Nov. 3. The nature of the scripts are testimony to the shrewd nature of the Pillion campaign techniques. Instead of bogging down in the mires of Rockefeller vs. Goldwater rival GOP philosophies, Pillion chose local bread-and-butter issues.

It took nearly 1½ hours for shooting the two one-minute spots, what with rehearsing and taping in triplicate. Back to Ellcott Square went Pillion, where his "intelligence staff" produced a rerun of his opponent's remarks on a local radio station. Then to his Lackawanna office for a two-hour huddle with campaign aides, producing among other things the details for financing the radio-TV spots (jointly shared by the Erie County Republican Committee and Pillion Campaign Committee funds), some work on his forthcoming evening talk and a long distance call to his Washington office to check on a constituent's problem.

The day's only relaxation was a half-hour at his lake shore home, 17 miles west of Buffalo, where he bantered with his wife and his three-year-old grandson. But even this had some political overtones when his wife asked anxiously (after hearing his opinion on the radio)—"Did you really, John, introduce a bill to abolish the State Department?"

That's typical of the way my argument twists things," growled Pillion, as he explained that the purpose of his legislation had been to combine the State Department with the Defense Department, the Central Intelligence Agency and related groups in a more effective instrument for U.S. foreign policy.

First Vote Cast

Dinner at a nearby restaurant was made more pleasant by the proud announcement of a constituent that she had just cast the first vote for Pillion by mailing in an absentee ballot prior to departure for Florida.

Not long after, another constituent at the Republican Club rally at the Wales Center, Pillion said, reminded Pillion that the

congressman had intervened successfully with state authorities to keep a big tree on his property from being axed by state highway authorities.

The fire hall rally was not big or hoisterous, but Pillion and the area's GOP candidates for the state senate and assembly got friendly attention as they preached their political sermons.

For Pillion, it was an updated version of his recent Buffalo Ad Club speech, in which he contrasted the foreign and domestic "go-for-broke" policies of the national Democratic administrations with "soundness" of the GOP program. It isn't Barry Goldwater who is "trigger-happy," he proclaimed, but the Democrats.

It was the one moment during the day when the Hamburg congressman discussed at some length the reasons why he is supporting the Goldwater-Miller ticket. A Bethlehem steel worker, who said he sometimes has difficulty holding up the Republican end of political discussions at the plant, happily made copious notes.

'Running on Own'

As Pillion drove home at the end of his busy day, he made it clear, however, that he is not depending on the popularity of the national or local tickets for his own reelection.

"This year," he explained, "everyone is running on his own. If I were to sum up my campaign in a sentence, I would say that it is based on the high quality of personal services I have given my constituents on a nonpartisan basis in the past and that I will continue to do in the future."

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